

The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat  
**Draft**

**The School Effectiveness Framework:**  
A Collegial Process for Continued Growth in the  
Effectiveness of Ontario Elementary Schools

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Implementation Pilot  
September 2007 – June 2008



## The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat

Dear Colleagues,

The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat is pleased to present *The School Effectiveness Framework: A Collegial Process for Continued Growth in the Effectiveness of Ontario Elementary Schools*. This is an implementation pilot for the 2007–08 school year.

This initiative is a reflection of The Secretariat's belief that Ontario's schools are ready to move to a new level of professional accountability. This is based on a philosophy of shared commitment and collegiality. It means that we accept responsibility to determine our own effectiveness and to take steps to improve our schools.

Over the last three years, The Secretariat has worked co-operatively with you to improve student achievement. We thank you for your commitment to this goal, for the gains that you have made and for your resolve to work towards further improvement.

We have moved through distinct phases in our evolution: building consensus, building capacity and sharpening our focus. With your continued support we are now moving into Phase 4. During this phase, we seek to intensify our collective efforts by deepening instructional effectiveness and pedagogy and focusing on professional accountability and networks.

In working with you, we recognize that sustained and ongoing growth depends upon an alliance of key education partners working towards a shared vision of improvement and effectiveness. With a world-wide trend that focuses on accountability, we felt that, given our stage of development, it was important for us to take responsibility for improving our system from within. Indeed, the ultimate form of accountability occurs when professionals engage in self-assessment and are willing to take steps to bring about improvement. This will, undoubtedly, assist us in building public confidence in the ability of our schools to meet the needs of students and to improve their performance.

The Secretariat respects your professionalism and believes in your desire to build capacity within the system to identify successes and the areas which need improvement. These are skills which all teachers, principals and education workers should continue to refine if, indeed, we are to achieve the excellence and equity which we know is possible for Ontario schools.

Professional accountability goes hand in hand with the maturing of a profession. In this regard, we urge you to continue to work with us to take stock of our progress, identify areas for focused attention and move forward together, with determination and tenacity.

Sincerely,



Avis E. Glaze  
Chief Student Achievement Officer and CEO  
The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat

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## Part 1

### Overview

*With the current momentum in improvement trends, schools are now poised to implement fully the strategies that they know will bring about further improvement in student achievement.*

*It is against this backdrop that The Secretariat developed the School Effectiveness Framework to guide school and board analysis and improvement planning.*

## **The School Effectiveness Framework:**

### **A Collegial Process for Continued Growth in the Effectiveness of Ontario Elementary Schools**



## Part 1 – Overview

### The Context

The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat was established in November 2004 to support boards in improving student achievement. Student achievement officers were selected to work in teams to realize the Ontario government's goal of improving student learning and achievement in literacy and numeracy. The Secretariat worked collaboratively with school districts to set ambitious targets and to implement strategies for continuous improvement. We stressed high expectations within the context of a collaborative learning culture characterized by a strong reliance on evidence-based strategies.

The Ministry of Education identified three key goals to support the government's direction for education and to improve the achievement of students in elementary and secondary schools. The mandate of The Secretariat is closely aligned to these priorities:

- High levels of student achievement
- Reduced gaps in student achievement
- Increased public confidence in education

The initial task of The Secretariat was to establish credibility and to work in partnership with school districts to build consensus, support board-identified projects, build capacity and engender a sense of urgency in improving student achievement. Since its inception, The Secretariat has focused on engaging teachers, principals, superintendents, directors, trustees, support staff, deans of education and all those who work in schools in sharing responsibility for improved student achievement. It was important for us to establish a working relationship with the federations, unions and associations. With the support of The Secretariat, boards focused on improvement planning, instructional effectiveness, closing the gaps in achievement and leadership development.

Over time, The Secretariat strengthened its commitment to use research, evidence-based inquiry and data-based decision making. A new tool, Statistical Neighbours, was developed and used to track school improvement trends in a variety of contexts. To support capacity building, The Secretariat developed resources and professional learning materials for teachers and principals and a webcast series to ensure that Ontario educators could access high-quality materials at anytime from any part of the province.



Having built a solid foundation in solidarity with the field, The Secretariat sharpened its focus and moved forward with greater precision and intentionality. Our capacity building focused on high-yield strategies and on building an alliance with directors and superintendents of schools to support implementation. With the current momentum in improvement trends, schools are now poised to implement fully the strategies that they know will bring about further improvement in student achievement.

It is against this backdrop that The Secretariat developed the School Effectiveness Framework to guide school and board analysis and improvement planning. This initiative is a reflection of The Secretariat's belief that Ontario's schools are moving to a new level of professional accountability.

### **Equity of Outcomes for All Learners**

One of the nine strategies of The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat is to mobilize the system to provide equity of outcomes. This belief is at the core of Ontario education and is foundational to the work of The Secretariat. We are convinced that excellence and equity go hand in hand and that as we put measures in place to raise the bar we must also close the achievement gaps, thereby enhancing the future possibilities for all Ontario students.

The Ontario educational system has a mandate to reach every child and to bring about success for all, regardless of personal circumstances. In a truly equitable system, factors such as race, gender and socio-economic status do not limit students from achieving ambitious outcomes or truncate their life chances. In fact, barriers are removed as schools assume responsibility for creating the conditions to ensure success. The basic premise of equity is fairness and the belief in the moral imperative of schools to educate all children successfully. An equitable system, therefore, empowers all students to achieve. In such settings, variations in learning are not attributed to background variables.

### **An equitable system:**

- believes that all children can learn and achieve given the proper supports;
- assumes that ability exists in all groups, across demographic lines and that within any group, many students will excel;
- stresses high expectations for achievement and holds students to rigorous performance standards;
- rejects negative stereotypes about students' potential and ability;
- provides challenging and relevant curriculum for all students;
- disaggregates data in order to determine individual needs;
- meets individual needs through customization or personalization of the curriculum;





- differentiates instruction;
- accommodates diverse learning styles;
- ensures access and inclusion;
- connects students to real life experiences;
- capitalizes on diversity and creates a positive classroom environment based on respect and empathy; and
- involves parents in meaningful ways in their children's education.

Teacher/student relationships matter in an equitable environment. When teachers connect with students from diverse backgrounds and students feel valued and appreciated, student engagement and motivation to learn increase. Equity of outcomes requires that educators utilize all the strategies within their repertoire to close achievement gaps between high-performing groups of students and those who are not achieving their potential. Excellence and equity are two sides of the same coin. Whether or not students learn and achieve success in school is a true measure of equity of outcomes.

### **Professional Accountability**

The framework will provide ways in which teachers and school and system administrators accept responsibility to hold themselves accountable for ensuring that research-based, effective strategies are consistently implemented across the province. This kind of accountability, which Wagner & Kegan (2006) also describes as “horizontal accountability”, is founded on a philosophy of shared commitments and a sense of purpose in the work. It also reflects a notion of “collegial respect”, rather than “vertical accountability”.

Ontario has recognized that sustained improvement cannot be attained by simplistic, top-down and short-term mandates for change. We know that ongoing growth depends upon an alliance of key education partners working towards a shared goal of improvement and effectiveness. This will require greater precision, alignment and a more strategic allocation of resources to ensure equity of outcomes for all students. Focused discussion, resulting from this process, will facilitate a more precise improvement planning strategy and a shared understanding of what makes schools effective.

There is a world-wide trend that focuses on accountability. Too often, though, this refers to an accountability that is imposed from external sources. It is our perspective that Ontario educators wish to monitor their own effectiveness. Indeed, the ultimate form of accountability occurs when professionals engage in self-assessment and are willing to take steps to bring about improvement. Assuming this responsibility is one way of building public confidence in the ability of schools to meet students' needs and to improve their performance.





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The Ontario philosophy respects the professionalism of educators and believes in their desire to bring about improvement from within the profession. We acknowledge the strongly held belief of educators in the moral purpose of educating all students to high levels of achievement. Recent research by individuals such as Leithwood (2006) confirms the notion that teacher job satisfaction and sense of self-efficacy increase when students are successful. Teachers' sense of professionalism is enhanced when schools improve.

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*Through the actions of empowered individuals who have fully internalized the need for a sense of urgency, Ontario education will move to a deeper level in its development.*

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The Secretariat has worked co-operatively to solidify the alliances necessary for success of all students, regardless of their background. For us, excellence and equity, far from being polar opposites, are two sides of the same coin. This is a basic tenet that many accept fully. Schools across Ontario are demonstrating that both excellence and equity can be achieved.

Professional accountability goes hand in hand with a new sense of the maturing of the profession.

The Secretariat will certainly build upon the skill and will of board and school staff to engage in a self-directed improvement agenda. In working closely with the field, our experience is that this is a logical next step in building capacity and bringing about improvement. Through the actions of empowered individuals who have fully internalized the need for a sense of urgency, Ontario education will move to a deeper level in its development. This desire to bring about the best in our students can only be realized through the collective efforts of the entire school staff in taking ownership for school improvement.



## Taking Stock – Moving Forward with Greater Precision

Thanks to Ontario educators, results in provincial assessments have improved overall over the past four years. Comparing the 2006–07 results with the 2002–03 results, all assessment areas have improved with the following gains in achievements:

- increased by 15 percentage points: Grade 3 writing (French language);
- increased by 14 percentage points: Grade 3 mathematics (French language);
- increased by 12 percentage points: Grade 3 reading (English language), Grade 3 mathematics (English language);
- increased by 11 percentage points: Grade 6 writing (French language);
- increased by 10 percentage points: Grade 6 reading (French language), Grade 6 mathematics (French language);
- increased by 9 percentage points: Grade 3 writing (English language);
- increased by 8 percentage points: Grade 6 reading (English language);
- increased by 7 percentage points: Grade 3 reading (French language), Grade 6 writing (English language); and
- increased by 6 percentage points: Grade 6 mathematics (English language).

In addition:

- the percentage of schools achieving 75 per cent or higher in Grade 6 reading has doubled from 13 to 25 per cent of schools; and
- the percentage of schools where less than a third of students are achieving the provincial standard in Grade 3 reading has reduced from 19 to 5 per cent.

The 2006–07 assessments include some positive results for closing gaps in performance:

- English language learners have improved their performance in all assessment areas and there has been a closing of the gap between their performance and students overall.
- There have also been gains for students with special educational needs – French language students with special educational needs have improved their achievements in all assessments and English language students with special educational needs have improved their achievements in most assessments.
- The gender gap is closing in some assessments, but in most areas there was no improvement in 2006–07.



After three years of continuous year-on-year improvement, the 2006–07 results sustained previous improvement overall but there has been no further increase in results.

We need to take stock of progress, identify areas for focused attention and move forward together with greater precision.

The Secretariat recognizes that schools in general and classrooms in particular, control the conditions for student success in literacy and numeracy development. We acknowledge the achievements of all those who work in schools, their commitment to students and their ongoing efforts to improve student learning. Teachers and support staff are using data to understand student learning needs and to design more effective instructional strategies in literacy and numeracy. They are developing greater precision in knowledge, skills and daily practices to enhance student success.

School and system administrators are certainly creating positive teaching and learning environments, providing instructional leadership and aligning school, district and provincial goals.

We celebrate the progress that has been made. We applaud the efforts of Ontario educators.

## **The Rationale for the School Effectiveness Framework**

One of the founding premises of The Secretariat is that capacity should be built within boards and schools to ensure that all educators have the necessary knowledge and skills to improve instructional practices and results. Our goal is to support boards in building internal capacity to equip individuals with these skills. We are building upon existing good practices to develop a process that can be used across systems. We have learned a great deal about effective improvement strategies from the educational literature, but even more importantly, we have a repertoire of evidence that we have gathered right here in our province through our experience with the Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP), Schools on the Move: Lighthouse Program and Turnaround schools. The School Effectiveness Framework is a compilation of current research, lessons learned from the diagnostic process previously in use and successful practice from across Ontario.

The Secretariat believes that a robust public education system can only be created and sustained by the joint efforts of all system partners. Because of the progress that has been made in different schools and districts, it is now time for a reflective look at our strengths in order to identify the areas that





require further attention. The Secretariat has developed this framework to assist boards and schools in sustaining a culture of continuous school improvement.

The key purposes of this framework are to:

- build board and school capacity in identifying strengths, areas which require attention and next steps;
- foster introspection, reflection and analysis;
- lead to better improvement planning with precision and intentionality;
- act as a catalyst for collaborative and collegial conversations about improvement from within;
- implement high-yield research-based strategies;
- determine the monitoring and feedback strategies necessary for improvement and accountability;
- provide a forum for consensus building around school improvement;
- develop a deeper understanding of the unique improvement needs of schools; and
- communicate, celebrate and continue to build public confidence around school effectiveness.

This initiative will consolidate successes, provide solid data for deeper conversations and help boards and schools become more precise, intentional and strategic in their improvement planning.

The following quote reinforces this point:

*Instead of being a point of contention, data can provide the vehicle for moving the community forward ... Accountability and data are right in the centre of the conversation, not as instruments of naming and blaming but as the grist for discussing policies and practices in conversations that nourish the collective will for action. Educators themselves become the prime consumers of data as they work towards making reasoned decisions about their actions in the school and sharing their thinking and their work with parents, students and others in the community who care about education.* (Earl & Katz, 2006. p. 13)

## The Development of the Framework

The School Effectiveness Framework was developed with input from a steering committee of representatives from teachers' federations, principals' councils, supervisory officers' associations,



faculties of education and diagnosticians from the field. We thank the members of the steering committee for their willingness to share their expertise and assist in the development of this framework. It is through our collegial efforts that we will ensure continuous improvement in our schools and the best possible education for our students.

This framework will be used in a draft format as an implementation pilot over the next year. The parallel processes of implementation and gathering feedback will facilitate the solicitation of further input from stakeholders in order to refine the document.

## The School Effectiveness Framework

The ultimate goal of The School Effectiveness Framework is equity of outcomes for all students. It is for that reason that equity of outcomes is situated at the core and forms the focal point of our framework. This serves as the lens through which all that happens in schools is filtered. It reinforces our moral purpose and determines our effectiveness.

The framework is intended to provide indicators for critical analysis of key components of school effectiveness. The framework will be used for both the School Self-Assessment Process and the District Review Process. Based on the literature on what makes schools effective, nine components have been identified as factors that have an impact on student achievement. Schools and boards may wish to add a tenth component to reflect a local priority. While all components of the framework are important and in keeping with our belief that one size does not fit all, The Secretariat has divided these components into two categories, the Essential Components and the Components for Local Selection, as follows:

### The Essential Components

- Student Learning and Achievement
- Instructional Leadership
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Curriculum and Instructional Strategies

### The Components for Local Selection

- Mission, Vision and Values
- School Culture
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Home, School and Community Outreach and Partnerships
- Student Leadership and Engagement
- Other (based on a locally identified priority)



FIGURE 1

## The School Effectiveness Framework: A Collegial Process for Continued Growth in the Effectiveness of Ontario Elementary Schools

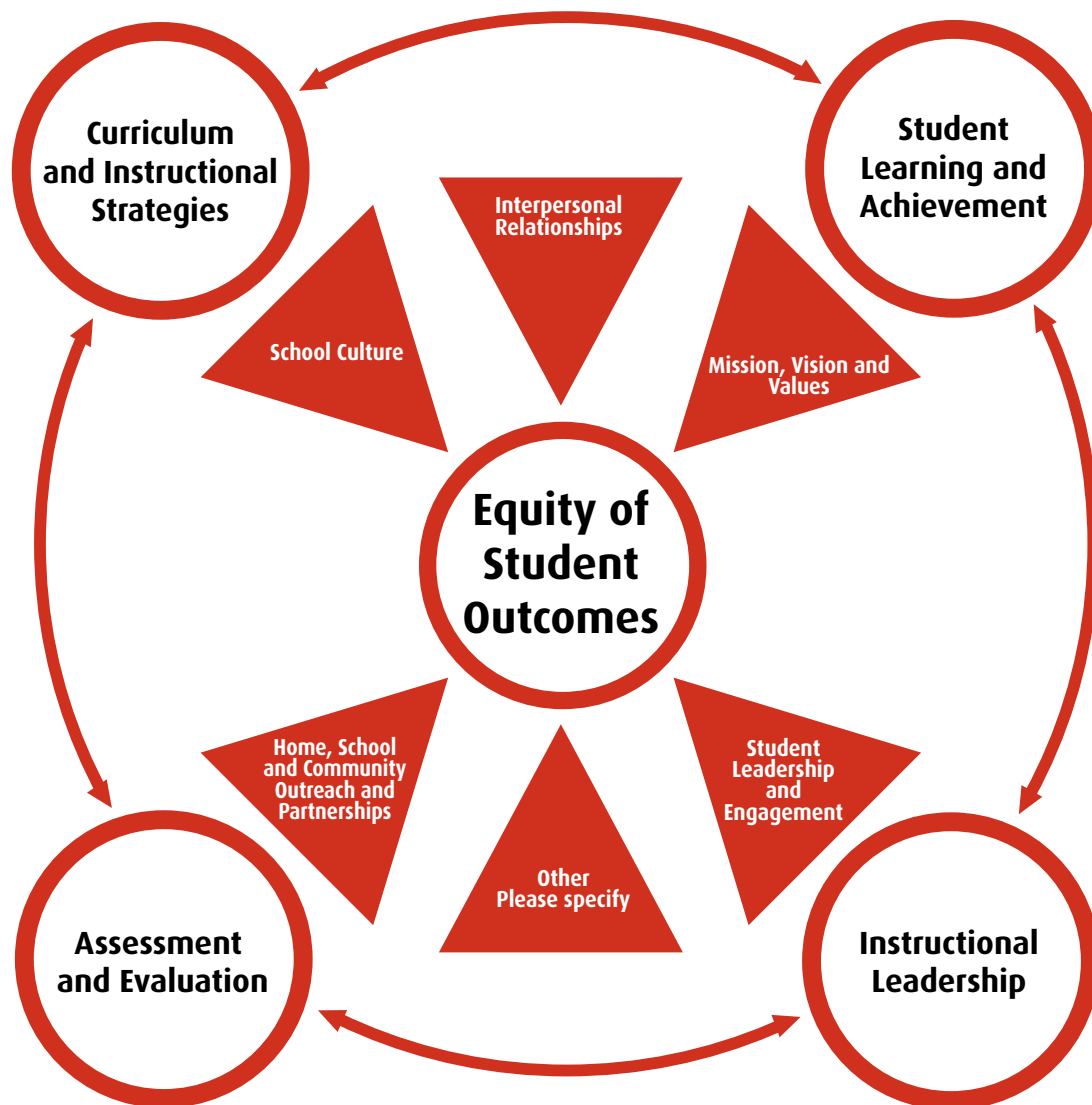


Figure 1 illustrates the framework and its components and how they contribute to equity of student outcomes. Keep in mind that the framework has been designed with two key uses in mind:

1. The School Self-Assessment Process
2. The District Review Process

The expectation is that districts and schools will review all of the Essential Components in a given cycle. In order to facilitate individualization and choice, districts and schools may select additional components as required from the list of the Components for Local Selection.

The School Self-Assessment Process involves all staff in every elementary school, is a cyclical process and should take no longer than three months.

The District Review Process is also cyclical and should take no more than four weeks allowing for a number of cycles in the year. Data gathered from this process will inform board priority setting and budget processes.



### The School Self-Assessment Process

School self-assessment is a catalyst for improvement planning and implementation refinement. It facilitates and guides self-reflection and provides support for action planning. It is about how we get to know ourselves better and identify the strategies that will leverage change and improvement. At the heart of self-assessment, whether for individuals or organizations, there are three basic questions:

- How effective are we in achieving our student learning and achievement goals?
- What is the evidence?
- What actions will we take to ensure continuous improvement?

School self-assessment is a process undertaken collaboratively by the school, in which all staff members systematically gather and analyse evidence about how well their students are doing and then use this evidence to assess aspects of the school's performance. School self-assessment is forward thinking about change and improvement. It involves groups of teachers with their leadership team reflecting on their work together. The process of self-assessment should help the school focus its improvement planning efforts.

The basic tenets, summarized by Riley and MacBeath (2000, p. 1), are as follows:

- Self-knowledge and self-efficacy are as important for schools as they are for individuals.
- Reflective, self-critical schools are better schools for teachers and students.
- Shared understanding of what makes schools "good" provides a basis for dialogue among all stakeholders (administrators, teachers, parents and students).
- Tools of self-assessment, built into the day-to-day life of the school, improve the quality of teaching and learning, school ethos and leadership.

It is important to emphasize that school self-assessment is not an externally imposed evaluation, but an opportunity for principals and teachers to reflect on key aspects of their classroom practice as they relate what they are doing to improve student learning. It is, ideally, a collaborative activity which encourages open, honest discussion about strengths, areas requiring improvement and next steps.

For school self-assessment to be successful, certain conditions must be in place (Vanhoof & Van Petegem, 2006):

- clear communication throughout the process;
- personal and professional support, where needed;
- shared leadership so that appropriate stakeholders are involved in decision making; and
- willingness of teaching staff to share ideas, to explore, to build commitment and to mentor one another.



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The School Self-Assessment Process, illustrated in Figure 2, outlines a school-based process, with the principal and School Improvement Team (SIT) playing a major role. It shows the different phases of the process and the key actions associated with each phase. Ongoing job-embedded capacity building and further development of the school as a professional learning community (PLC) is an integral part of this process.

The components identified in the School Effectiveness Framework will form the basis for the School Self-Assessment Process. This will culminate in a summary of strengths and areas requiring further development. Rigour in the analysis of the evidence and decision making around strengths, areas which need improvement and future directions must permeate the entire process. Equally important is the evidence of an ethos of trust, respect and collegiality. Each member of the staff must assume the role of Critical Friend as they invite each other to engage in self-analysis at its best in order to create a preferred future for the school.

The School Self-Assessment Process will take the work of the school PLC to a deeper level as staff members determine their ongoing capacity-building needs and identify strategies for implementation.

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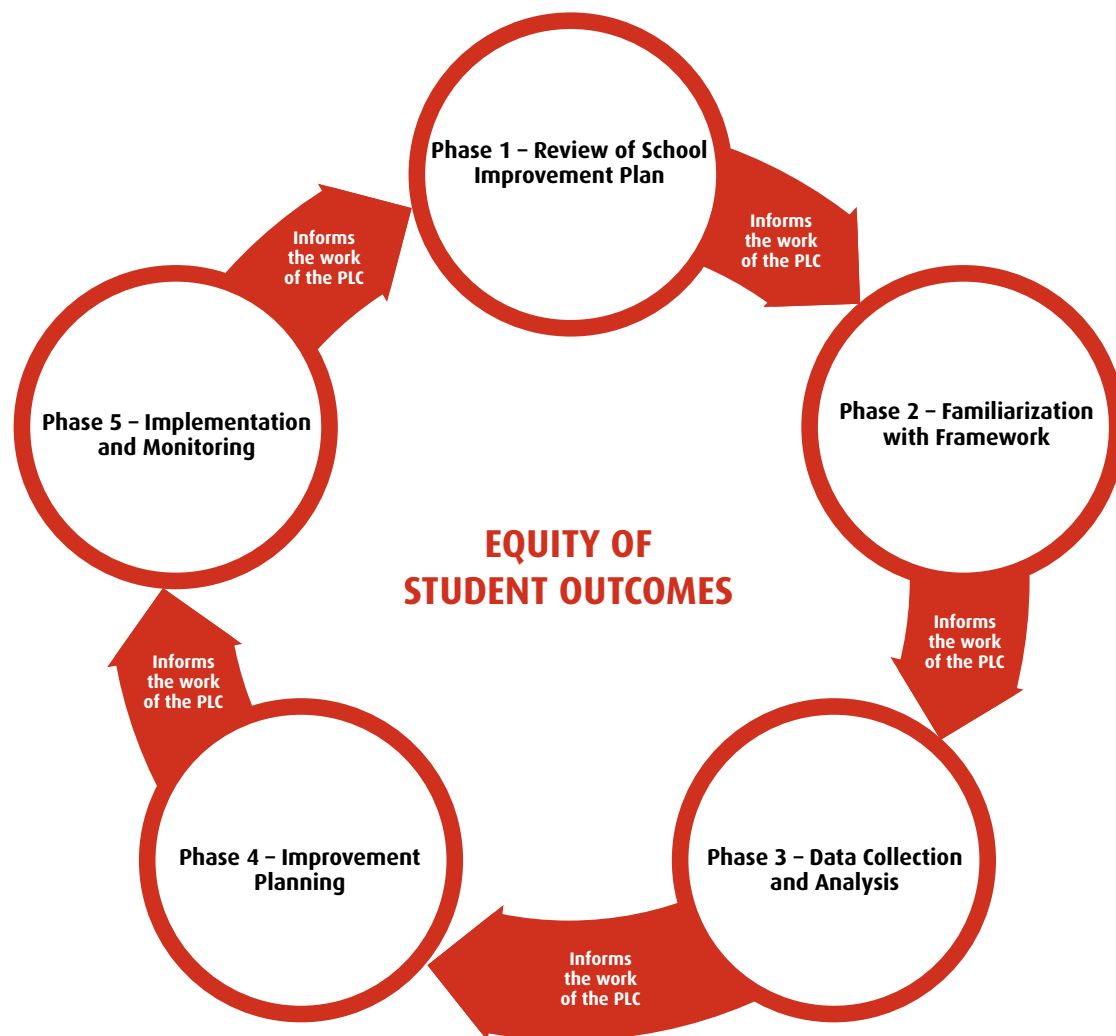
*“... mere collegiality will not cut it. Discussions about curricular issues or popular strategies can feel good but go nowhere. The right image to embrace is of a group of teachers who meet regularly to share, refine and assess the impact of lessons and strategies continuously to help increasing numbers of students learn at higher levels.” (Schmoker, 2005)*

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FIGURE 2

## The School Self-Assessment Process



The responsibility of this process rests with the principal and the school improvement team in collaboration with the entire staff.

### Phase 1 – Review of School Improvement Plan

- Review priorities
- Review targets
- Identify and celebrate successes
- Identify challenges
- Establish new priorities following this review

### Phase 2 – Familiarization with Framework

- Determine the scope of the process
- Review indicators for the Essential Components and Components Selected Locally
- Ensure a school-wide involvement in the process
- Ensure regular internal communication regarding the process

### Phase 3 – Data Collection and Analysis

- Collect and analyse data
- Using the indicators of the framework, identify strengths and areas requiring improvement
- Prepare a summary of findings and recommendations for improvement

### Phase 4 – Improvement Planning

- Involve all staff and school council
- Identify areas which need improvement
- Specify high-yield strategies
- Establish timelines
- Agree on responsibilities
- Target resources
- Include capacity-building needs and focus

### Phase 5 – Implementation and Monitoring

- Identify indicators of progress
- Ensure monitoring process is in place (Ask: How effective are we in achieving our student learning and achievement goals? What is the evidence? What actions will we take to ensure continuous improvement?)
- Revise school improvement plan



## The District Review Process

We know that district review processes are not new and in fact are already in place in some boards. This provincial approach to district review will provide consistency of support across the province. A key operational principle of the School Effectiveness Framework is that the needs of school boards vary. This principle has been respected so that choice is built into the process in making local decisions. The following are board decisions:

- the number of schools that will be reviewed each year;
- the composition of the review team;
- the training and orientation of those who will serve on the teams;
- the reporting and monitoring process; and
- how the findings will affect future decisions, including internal capacity building and resource allocation.

Figure 3 represents the District School Review Process. This process provides support for the school in identifying strengths and areas for further development that will result in continuous improvement in student learning. Using the indicators in the School Effectiveness Framework, the district review team will work with the school to determine the scope of the review and collect evidence that will guide improvement planning and the implementation of appropriate strategies. A summary report will be provided to the school that will assist the school in sharpening the focus and building the capacity of their professional learning community. Superintendents of schools will play a key role in supporting this process and in monitoring progress.

### Expectations:

1. All OFIP 1 and a sample of OFIP 2 schools received a diagnostic report during the past school year. Therefore, during this school year, boards will be selecting a sample of OFIP 3 schools to be a part of the District Review Process. OFIP 3 schools are schools where 51 – 74 per cent of the students meet the provincial standard in reading; however, they have been static or declining over several years as measured by EQAO. Boards with no OFIP 3 schools should select schools that require this additional support to assist them in achieving improvement in student learning.
2. Boards may select other schools to be included in the District Review Process.
3. The district review team should be chaired by a superintendent of schools or superintendent of program/curriculum or other superintendent as designated by the director.
4. Teams should seek to build system capacity by being inclusive in the composition of the team. Members of the team should not necessarily work in their own school, but by participating in the process in schools other than their own they can contribute to the cross-fertilization of knowledge and expertise.



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5. Teachers' federations have a vested interest in the quality of our schools. Boards are encouraged to include the federations and unions in their efforts to engage in a process that is truly collegial and collaborative.

### **Guidelines for the Use of the Data**

It must be reiterated that this is a process that is collegial and collaborative. Since its inception, The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat has rejected the "shame and blame" and ranking approach to school improvement. In fact, Ontario is one of the few jurisdictions in the world that is achieving results by building upon the professionalism and goodwill of our educators. We will stay the course.

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*In fact, Ontario is one of the few jurisdictions in the world that is achieving results by building upon the professionalism and goodwill of our educators.*

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Data from the District Review Process must be used for the improvement of the school. It may also be used for research, conducted by the Ministry of Education, for decision making regarding the allocation of resources or for school- or board-based capacity building. As well, it will provide evidence of successful practices and facilitate sharing among educators.

Schools or boards may wish to share successes and next steps with parents and the local community. In such instances, there must be nothing in a report that can identify a particular teacher or employee of the school.

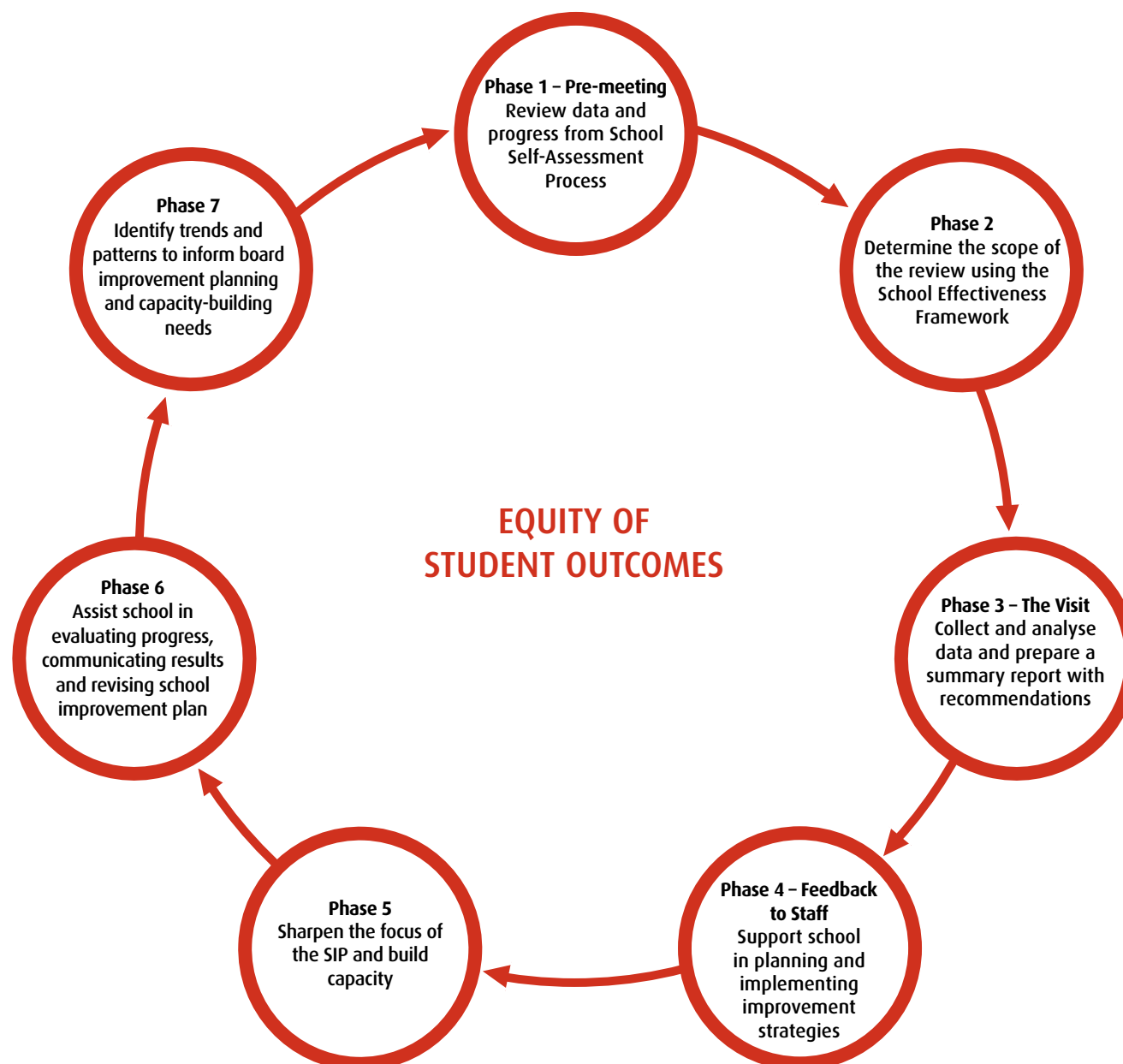
### **Secretariat Support for This Process**

The Secretariat will provide funds for a dedicated staffing allocation at the supervisory officer or principal level to guide and support the process. The Secretariat will also provide initial capacity-building sessions for supervisory officers and principals. Boards will then be expected to build internal capacity as time progresses.



FIGURE 3

## The District Review Process





## Roles and Responsibilities

### **Student Achievement Officers (SAOs) assigned to OFIP 1 and 2 Schools:**

The SAO assigned to the school serves as a resource to the principal and school improvement team (SIT) in areas such as data analysis, school improvement planning, target setting, developing a professional learning community (PLC), developing follow-up plans for the school and analysing student work.

### **Field Team Leaders:**

The Secretariat's Field Team Leaders will provide direction to boards on the parameters for the District Review Process. The Field Team Leaders will assist in capacity building for the District Steering Committee and the District Review Teams in order to increase their confidence in managing the process. They will be participants in at least one district review in order to make recommendations to The Secretariat on the improvement of the District Review Process. Reports from the District Review Process should be shared with the LNS Field Team Leader in order to inform the capacity-building priorities of The Secretariat.

The Field Team Leader will work with the superintendent of schools to support improvement in their family/cluster of schools and provide feedback to The Secretariat about the School Self-Assessment and District Review Processes.

### **School Effectiveness Lead:**

The School Effectiveness Lead is responsible for the organization, administration, management and implementation of The School Effectiveness Framework in the board. He or she is also responsible for building the capacity of principals and supervisory officers to ensure an effective process. The School Effectiveness Lead has demonstrated skill in managing and leading successful organizational change initiatives at the school or board level. The School Effectiveness Lead reports to the director of education and provides updates through the director to the board of trustees.

### **Trustees:**

Trustees are responsible for the overall effectiveness of school boards and for providing strategic leadership to support the board's mission. Creating the conditions to ensure all students achieve is an essential aspect of their role. In keeping with the philosophy of continuous improvement, trustees are asked to support and facilitate the implementation of this initiative in each school board.



### **Directors of Education:**

Directors of education are responsible for the quality and effectiveness of school boards. Student achievement is the essence of a successful school system. Directors of education are expected to provide leadership in this process by articulating the goals, rationale and vision for professional accountability. As well, they ensure that the data gathered in this process are used for future decision making. It is the responsibility of the director to select a designate who reports directly to him/her to lead the school effectiveness process.

### **Supervisory Officers:**

Supervisory officers as system leaders play an essential role in supporting principals to ensure that schools effectively serve the needs of students. Quality assurance is an essential element of their focus on continuous improvement.

Business superintendents support directors of education in ensuring that financial resources are allocated to support the primary purpose of schools – namely, student achievement.

Superintendents of schools play an integral role in the successful implementation and monitoring of the District Review Process.

### **Principals:**

According to Leithwood (2006), school leadership is second only to classroom teaching in importance in improving student achievement. Principals, working collaboratively with the school improvement team, will conduct the School Self-Assessment Process and facilitate the District Review Process within their school. It is their responsibility to ensure that strengths are celebrated and that areas requiring improvement form a basis for future actions in the school improvement plan.

### **Teachers:**

Instruction itself has the largest influence on student achievement (Schmoker, 2005). The commitment of Ontario teachers to their students and to the success of the school is pivotal. The Secretariat is dependent upon their involvement in this process to develop a deeper understanding of the unique improvement needs of schools and the demands of their workplace.



### **Other Educational Support Workers:**

Schools rely on educational support workers to support their mission and goals. Educational workers who have chosen to work in the field of education, because of a commitment to students and their learning, have a vested interest in the quality and success of their schools. Their impact throughout this process will provide invaluable insight into the strengths and needs of their schools.

### **School Councils:**

School Councils are asked to familiarize themselves with The School Effectiveness Framework in order to support the implementation of the School Improvement Plan.

## **Connections with Other Ministry of Education Initiatives**

### **The Aménagement linguistique Policy – French-Language Policy and Programs Branch:**

Each of Ontario's French-language school boards and school authorities, in collaboration with parents and community organizations, has developed and implemented the aménagement linguistique policy. This policy promotes the fulfilment of the French-language school's mandate and increases the educational system's capacity to ensure the protection, enhancement and transmission of the French language and culture in a minority setting.

The following objectives of the aménagement linguistique policy are reflected in the School Effectiveness Framework.

- Deliver high-quality instruction in French-language schools adapted to the minority setting. This objective is reflected in the following components of the School Effectiveness Framework: Student Learning and Achievement and Assessment and Evaluation.
- Educate young francophones to become competent and responsible citizens, empowered by their linguistic and cultural identity. This objective is reflected in the following components of the School Effectiveness Framework: Mission, Vision and Values, School Culture, Interpersonal Relationships and Student Leadership and Engagement.
- Increase the capacity of learning communities, including school staff, students and parents, to support students' linguistic, educational and cultural development throughout their lives. This objective is reflected in the following components of the School Effectiveness Framework: Instructional Leadership and Curriculum and Instructional Strategies.
- Expand and enrich the francophone environment through solid partnerships among the school, the family and the community as a whole. This objective is reflected in the Home, School and Community Outreach and Partnership component of the School Effectiveness Framework.





### **The Leadership Framework – Instruction and Leadership Development Division:**

The School Effectiveness Framework replaces the existing diagnostic process for elementary schools. While the School Effectiveness Framework looks at the indicators of school effectiveness, the Leadership Framework looks at the competencies and practices of principals and vice-principals in enhancing school effectiveness. School leaders can refer to the Leadership Framework to understand the skills, knowledge and attitudes that they will need to lead their schools towards the indicators of school effectiveness. In this way, the two frameworks are complementary.

The essential components in The School Effectiveness Framework match well with the domains of the Leadership Framework; for example, instructional leadership is the one of the essential components in The School Effectiveness Framework and “leading the instructional program” is one of the five domains of the Leadership Framework. As well, one of the Components for Local Selection of the School Effectiveness Framework is “mission, vision and values” which matches with the domain “setting directions” in the Leadership Framework.

Neither framework is designed to be an evaluation tool for staff. The School Effectiveness Framework describes a process for schools to learn from observation, analysis, reflection and feedback. The Leadership Framework describes good leadership and is intended to inform the design of professional learning for leadership development.

Both frameworks are considered to be in draft form. Continuous feedback over the next year will inform revisions of the frameworks. The ministry will seek further opportunities to articulate the links between the frameworks and to other ministry initiatives during this pilot period.

### **The Leadership Self-Review Tool (LSRT) – Instruction and Leadership Development Division:**

The LSRT survey sets out examples of successful board leadership development practices based on research and effective practice and then it invites leaders to rate their own board’s performance of these practices. It focuses on how boards support their school principals and vice-principals.

As boards engage in the District Review Process, the LSRT is a useful tool to assess the support mechanisms they have in place or that they need to develop as they move through the phases of the process. In this way the two tools can work together to achieve successful outcomes.



### Special Education Policy and Programs Branch:

Classroom teachers in Ontario serve a growing number of students with diverse abilities. The document *Education for All* assists teachers in helping all of Ontario's students learn. The School Effectiveness Framework is consistent with the following foundational beliefs in *Education for All*.

- All students can succeed.
- Universal design and differentiated instruction are effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students.
- Successful instructional practices are founded on evidence-based research, tempered by experience.
- Each child has his or her unique patterns of learning.
- Classroom teachers are the key educators for a student's literacy and numeracy development.
- Classroom teachers need the support of the larger community environment that supports students with special education needs. One of The Secretariat's nine key strategies is to mobilize the system to provide equity of outcomes for all students and this is the overriding goal of the School Effectiveness Framework.

### Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategic Policy Branch:

The ministry provides funding for a Student Success Leader (SSL) at a senior level in every school board to be the primary contact with the ministry on Student Success/Learning to 18 Initiatives for students in Grades 7–12. They are responsible for building capacity with central board staff and school staff for the successful implementation of the four pillars of Student Success Grades 7–12. These are literacy, mathematical literacy, pathways and community and culture and caring.

SSLs play a key role in ensuring that there is a seamless transition of students between Grades 6 and 7 and between high school and the world of work, university, college, apprenticeship or community living. They provide support for programming to improve student achievement, student engagement and graduation rates. They are leaders in the focus on changing pedagogy and culture in schools, in Grades 7–12 and engaging the community to support student success. The indicators in the School Effectiveness Framework apply to all elementary schools and complement the work of the SSL in Grades 7 and 8.



### **Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA) – Information Management Branch:**

The ministry's Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA) initiative is helping to promote a healthy data culture within schools and boards across the province. Through the provision of MISA Local Capacity Building funding, school boards are increasingly able to collect, access and analyse appropriate data in order to make evidence-informed decisions to improve student outcomes. Through building capacity in the areas of technology, data management and use, MISA is a key enabler for the School Effectiveness Framework.





## Key Principles for Engagement

In order to be effective, it is essential that the review process is:

- focused on continuous improvement in student achievement;
- collaborative, collegial and respectful;
- open, honest and transparent;
- reflective, self-critical and growth-promoting;
- resulting in capacity building and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills; and
- a basis for dialogue and inquiry.

The over-arching purpose of this process is to facilitate school effectiveness and achieve equity of student outcomes. It is essential that the process culminate in changed practices where necessary.

## Not an Evaluative Tool

The framework is not designed to be a performance appraisal tool nor is it designed to evaluate the principal or any other staff member. It is a process that is essentially about schools that are willing and ready to learn from observation, analysis, reflection and feedback for improvement and action planning. It acknowledges where schools are and incorporates their vision of a preferred future.

## Feedback and Reporting

This District Review Process should culminate in a summary report that will assist schools in determining the key areas that need to be addressed in order to improve student achievement. Key observations, evidence of effectiveness and recommendations for improvement should be highlighted in the written feedback provided to principals and their staff. Feedback sessions should provide an opportunity for discussion in order to delve deeper into current practice and to determine next steps.

All feedback should respect the professionalism of those who work in schools and be presented in a way that fosters, rather than destroys, the will to experiment, innovate and take professional risks. Feedback at its best is precise, timely and based on evidence. It is designed to move schools towards higher levels of performance and effectiveness. The primary goal is to improve the learning of students, staff and the school as a professional community.



The summary report should provide a clear sense of the range of evidence to support the indicators outlined in the School Effectiveness Framework. More specifically this report should provide:

- a summary of strengths;
- areas requiring improvement;
- recommendations for capacity building;
- ways in which the school is providing equity of outcomes;
- clear recommendations for next steps in the improvement process; and
- a concluding statement about the effectiveness of the school in improving student achievement.

This process must be transparent. Clear and timely communication of findings and recommendations must be provided to the school staff. The review team should be available to discuss findings, recommendations and next steps. The spirit of this collegial process relies on honest and open feedback delivered in a respectful manner to members of the school staff.

## Improvement Planning

Once the staff receives feedback from the District Review Process, they need to incorporate the recommendations into the school improvement plan. It is critical that school staff take ownership in shaping the school improvement plan. Many schools have a school improvement team that ensures opportunities for distributed leadership. This results in many benefits such as:

- creating a culture of collaboration;
- fostering teacher self-efficacy and professionalism;
- facilitating succession planning; and
- acknowledging the talent that exists in the school.

School improvement planning involves groups of teachers and their leadership team reflecting on their work together. Staff members systematically gather and analyse evidence about how well their students are doing and then use this evidence to assess aspects of their school's performance.

The purpose of school improvement planning is to improve the quality of teaching and learning through targeted interventions. To be effective, alignment of the priorities, strategies and resources is required. Initiatives need to be integrated throughout the school. It is critical to identify and address the needs of groups of students who are underachieving by providing the strategies and programs to bring about equity of outcomes.



Key components of a school improvement plan include:

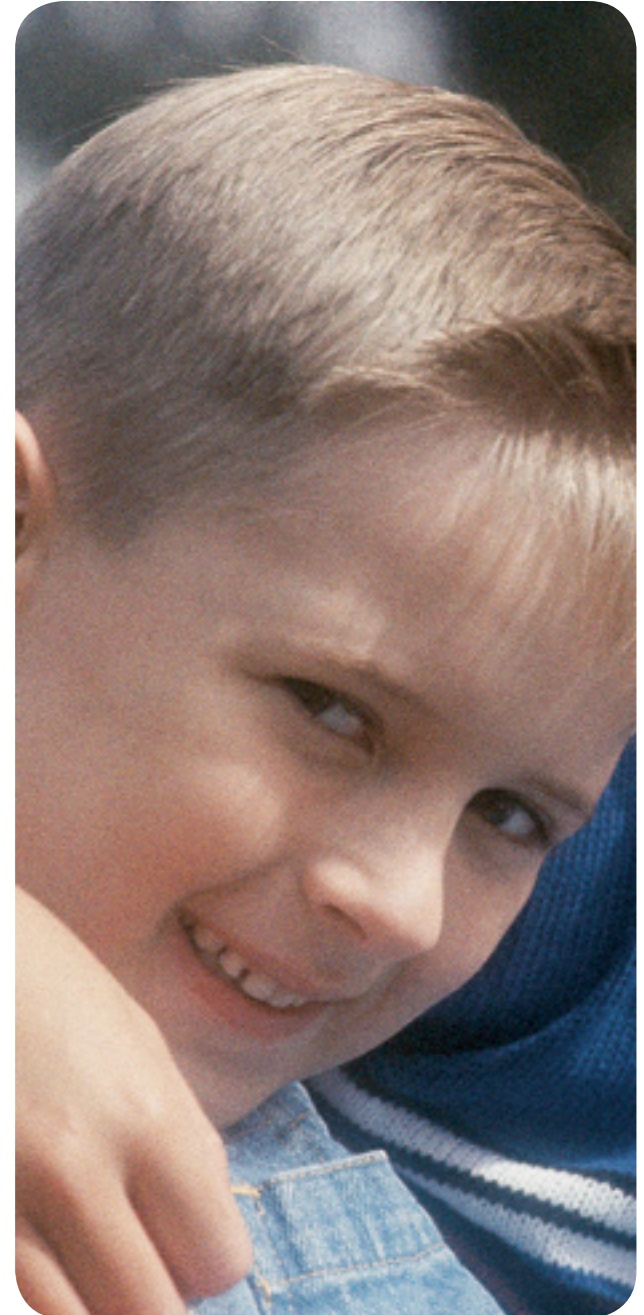
- a clear focus on literacy and numeracy;
- a small number of priorities that are determined through analysis of school data;
- evidence of alignment to the board plan;
- ambitious achievement targets;
- specific strategies to meet the targets;
- strategies to ensure equity of outcomes;
- clear timelines;
- identification of measurable indicators of success;
- monitoring strategies;
- capacity-building strategies;
- identification of required resources;
- communication strategies; and
- strategies for involving parents and community partners in the planning process.

The School Self-Assessment Process leads directly into the school improvement planning process.

## Fostering a Climate of Collaboration

No sustained change in practice is possible without a climate of collaboration in and across schools and across districts. Educators need to talk about their practices, share their knowledge and skills and support one another in the specific contexts in which they work.

Effective schools do not exist in isolation. They are an integral part of the communities they serve. Effective schools break down norms of privacy and isolation to foster learning across networks. They involve parents, families and caregivers in their children's education and help them to connect with relevant resources in the broader community. They also work in partnership with community groups and service agencies to expand knowledge, skills and resources in order to help all children overcome barriers. Schools become the hub of the community as they harness resources to support learning.





## A Call to Action

The framework is a living document. Listening to all those who have an interest in public education is essential to the way that The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat works in schools and communities. The Secretariat is founded upon a philosophy of mutual respect and collegiality, while pushing the boundaries for improvement in student achievement. We have also maintained that our collective efforts must be undertaken with a sense of urgency.

We call upon all of our partners to join with us in reviewing our criteria and processes in order to improve the effectiveness of the framework over time. We invite input in order to further support schools in their efforts to achieve continuous improvement and to deliver the best possible education. Our students deserve no less.



## Part 2

### The School Effectiveness Framework

*The framework is intended to guide critical analysis of key components of school effectiveness. It will be used for both the School Self-Assessment Process and the District Review Process.*

### **The School Effectiveness Framework:**

A Collegial Process for Continued Growth in the Effectiveness of Ontario Elementary Schools



## **The Essential Components**



## Student Learning and Achievement

Student achievement must be the primary outcome of schooling. Equity of outcomes is all about how students achieve regardless of their background. Schools control the conditions for success.

*“Successful schools do not give a second thought to decisive and immediate interventions, including changing schedules, providing double classes for literacy and math, requiring homework supervision, breaking down major projects into incremental steps and otherwise providing preventive assistance for students in need.” (Reeves, 2006)*

Indicators	Evidence
<p>There is a culture of high expectations for students from all backgrounds and experiences as manifested in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a belief that all children can learn;</li><li>• multiple opportunities for students to produce and display their best work;</li><li>• student belief and confidence in their ability to succeed;</li><li>• student career aspirations and expectations; and</li><li>• planning.</li></ul>	
<p>Ambitious targets have been established for student achievement.</p>	
<p>Achievement results are communicated to the school community to build public confidence.</p>	
<p>Ongoing analysis of student achievement is integral to the work of the professional learning community and informs instructional decisions.</p>	
<p>Teacher moderation of student work ensures consistency in assessment and evaluation practices.</p>	
<p>Comments</p>	

## Student Learning and Achievement continued

Indicators	Evidence
Student groups that make up the school population can see themselves reflected in the culture, curriculum and ethos of the school (specifically in programs, policies and practices, extra-curricular activities, awards, graduation, student leadership, clubs, etc.).	
There is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• early and focused interventions for struggling students;</li><li>• clear and consistent documentation of progress; and</li><li>• tracking and celebration of student achievement.</li></ul>	
Students are engaged in self-assessment and setting goals for the next steps in their learning.	
Support for learning and student achievement comes from the meaningful involvement of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• parents representing the diversity of the school community;</li><li>• school council;</li><li>• students; and</li><li>• community partners.</li></ul>	
There is a clear emphasis on literacy learning in the school.	
There is a clear emphasis on mathematics learning in the school.	
Effective mathematics learning environments are challenging, developmentally appropriate for all students and strategically organized.	
<b>Comments</b>	

Student Learning and Achievement continued

Indicators	Evidence
<p>Student learning stems from student access and engagement in solving open-routed problems at their own level of readiness.</p> <p>Effective mathematics learning environments foster students’ and teachers’ curiosity, perseverance and self-confidence in learning mathematics.</p> <p>The collaboratively developed character attributes are clearly articulated, modeled, taught and expected throughout the instructional day.</p>	
<p>Comments</p>	



## Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is demonstrated when the bulk of a principal's and teacher's time, energy and talents are devoted to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

### *"Instructional Leadership"*

- *Making student leadership the priority*
- *Setting high expectations for performance*
- *Gearing content and instruction to curriculum expectations*
- *Creating a culture of continuous learning for adults*
- *Using multiple sources of data to assess learning*
- *Activating the community's support for school success"* (Riggans-Newby, 2003)

*"School revitalization will not happen and certainly cannot be sustained, without teacher leadership."* (Crowther, 2002)

Indicators	Evidence
The Ontario Curriculum documents form the basis of instruction.	
Instructional time is protected (e.g., time on task and minimal interruptions).	
Non-negotiables for classroom practice have been established. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• common assessment tool</li><li>• differentiated instruction</li><li>• assessment drives instruction</li><li>• co-operative learning</li><li>• early interventions for struggling students</li><li>• comprehensive/balanced literacy program</li><li>• use of manipulatives in mathematics instruction</li><li>• classrooms have uninterrupted blocks of time for literacy and numeracy (100–120 minutes for literacy and 60 minutes for numeracy are recommended)</li><li>• other (please specify)</li></ul>	
Comments	

## Instructional Leadership continued

Indicators	Evidence
Principals and teachers work together to align curriculum and classroom practice with the goals in their school improvement plan.	
There is a process in place for monitoring progress in meeting goals specified in the school improvement plan.	
The school collects and analyses data to determine priorities and next steps.	
There is job-embedded professional learning for all staff and teachers systematically share successful practices, challenges and expertise.	
The school has a transparent mechanism in place for tracking, monitoring and discussing student achievement on an ongoing basis.	
There is a comparable learning experience across like grades and a continuum of knowledge and skills between grades.	
School organization decisions are designed to support the needs of all students.	
Character development is integrated and permeates school and classroom activities.	
The school improvement team is integral to the instructional leadership of the school.	
Comments	

## Instructional Leadership continued

Indicators	Evidence
<p>School administrators facilitate and are actively involved in supporting a culture of learning that promotes capacity building at the classroom, division and whole school level.</p> <p>The school budget reflects the school's goals and board's goals for improving student achievement.</p>	
<b>Comments</b>	



## Assessment and Evaluation

For all students to achieve provincial standards, it is essential that teachers and students become partners in the assessment process and work together to identify learning needs, plan for growth and focus instruction. Clear assessment targets help students understand where they are now, where we want them to be and how to get there. Learning must be organized into meaningful, reasonable blocks so that every student believes in his or her ability to learn and succeed.

1. **Assessment for learning** occurs before and during the instructional cycle. Assessment at the start of a new unit of study activates students' knowledge and experience and provides immediate feedback and encouragement to students and results in targeted instruction. Students have a clear sense of what is needed to get to the next level and teachers plan next steps for instruction.
2. **Assessment as learning** is a process of developing and supporting metacognition or awareness of the process of learning which enables students to monitor their progress and to adapt their strategies if they perceive they are not doing well. Assessment as learning focuses on the role of the student as the critical connector between assessment and learning.
3. **Assessment of learning** provides a summary of student learning at a given point in time.

*"Determining a student's strengths, interests and learning styles and connecting them with the curriculum is a key strategy for low socio-economic status students, whose success is largely based on the teacher's ability to assess their individual needs and assets and provide appropriate instruction."* (Barr & Parrett, 2007)

Indicators	Evidence
<p>The school follows the policy and/or procedures of the board's assessment and evaluation policy. The policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is clearly articulated and communicated to students, parents and caregivers;</li> <li>• identifies how and when students' learning will be assessed and evaluated;</li> <li>• includes modifications and accommodations to promote student learning; and</li> <li>• ensures that parents are aware of student progress in a timely manner.</li> </ul>	
<p>Students are involved in assessing, tracking and setting goals for their own learning (assessment as learning).</p>	
<p><b>Comments</b></p>	

## Assessment and Evaluation continued

Indicators	Evidence
Assessment is used to inform classroom instruction.	
There is a mechanism in place to track student achievement and update it regularly within grades and across divisions.	
Students are given time and opportunity to act upon the feedback they receive in order to revise and upgrade their work and track and set goals for their own learning. Feedback should be ongoing, timely, explicit, meaningful and constructive.	
Students have access to examples of work at different levels of achievement to assist them in a self-assessment of their own work.	
Data are disaggregated to identify and address the instructional needs of identified groups of students.	
Teachers collaborate to develop and evaluate common assessment tools and practices to ensure consistency of standards across grade levels.	
Teachers know their students' interests, talents, backgrounds and present performance level.	
<b>Comments</b>	

## Assessment and Evaluation continued

Indicators	Evidence
<p>Student progress is tracked and monitored at regular, short intervals to determine interventions that are necessary as well as appropriate pacing of instruction. Interventions should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• based on current data;</li> <li>• age-appropriate and engaging;</li> <li>• offered daily when no new teaching is happening; and</li> <li>• collaboratively designed and monitored as to their effectiveness.</li> </ul> <p>Students are supported and prepared to participate in student-led conferences.</p>	
<p><b>Comments</b></p>	



## Curriculum and Instructional Strategies

High-yield strategies are powerful instructional practices that have been verified through research to correlate with high student achievement.

Indicators	Evidence
All students are engaged in intellectually demanding tasks that require higher order and critical thinking.	
Curriculum and instruction require students to explore substantive and meaningful topics that connect to their diverse interests, aptitudes and backgrounds.	
Resources for students are suitable, relevant, current and inclusive. Texts of all types and genres are used in instruction (e.g., books, video, posters, magazines, advertisements, web logs, multimedia, charts, maps, graphs, movies).	
A wide variety of remedial and extended opportunities are available for students (e.g., more time, re-teaching using different strategies, assessment modifications, self-help checklists, graphic/visual organizers, peer tutoring, buddy programs, study skill strategies).	
Technology is integrated in a meaningful way across the curriculum in order to enrich student learning and to address a range of learning styles.	
The Individual Education Plan (IEP) is used as a planning, communication and accountability tool.	
IEPs describe the accommodations and curriculum modifications that are to be implemented as part of the student’s educational program.	
Comments	

## Curriculum and Instructional Strategies continued

Indicators	Evidence
Differentiated instruction is designed and delivered in a manner that helps to reduce the need for accommodations and curriculum modifications.	
A wide range of instructional strategies are in use (e.g., co-operative learning, discovery learning, hands-on problem solving, individual, small-group and whole-class instruction, etc.) that facilitate intended learning.	
A comprehensive/balanced literacy program is in place. Approaches include: language and word study, read-aloud, modeled writing, shared reading and writing, guided reading and writing, independent reading and writing.	
Authentic reading and writing are evident in classrooms and non-fiction writing is used in every subject area to ensure students write in a clear, accurate and persuasive manner.	
Practice and application of literacy skills are embedded in all curricular areas.	
Time for purposeful talk and interaction is necessary for real learning to occur. Instructional practice values time for accountable talk and interaction in order for students to clarify their thinking, learn to respect and build upon the ideas of others and articulate their views effectively.	
<b>Comments</b>	

## Curriculum and Instructional Strategies continued

Indicators	Evidence
<p>Powerful instructional strategies are used. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identifying similarities and differences (comparing, classifying, creating metaphors and creating analogies);</li><li>• summarizing and note taking (analysing information in depth and synthesizing information);</li><li>• reinforcing effort and providing recognition;</li><li>• homework and practice;</li><li>• non-linguistic representations (graphic organizers, pictures, pictographs, concrete representations and kinaesthetic activity);</li><li>• co-operative learning;</li><li>• setting goals and providing feedback;</li><li>• generating and testing hypotheses; and</li><li>• activating prior knowledge. (Marzano, 2007)</li></ul>	
<p>A comprehensive mathematics program engages all students in developing grade-appropriate conceptual understanding and procedural fluency through the use of mathematical processes.</p>	
<p>Teachers make explicit the mathematical concepts, strategies and skills during lessons.</p>	
<p>Teachers and students make sense of each other’s mathematical ideas, strategies and solutions to develop mathematical understanding.</p>	
<p>Teachers plan and implement three-part mathematics lessons daily during the numeracy block.</p>	
<p>Comments</p>	

## Curriculum and Instructional Strategies continued

Indicators	Evidence
Teachers and students communicate ideas, solutions and strategies using oral and written mathematical language (e.g., numbers, pictures, symbols, terms and models).	
Teachers choose teaching/learning strategies that activate students’ prior knowledge and experience so students are prepared cognitively, socially and emotionally for new learning.	
Students learn mathematics through problem-solving based lessons.	
Mathematics learning environments are challenging, developmentally appropriate for all students and strategically organized. They are engaging and foster curiosity, perseverance and self-confidence in students.	
Comments	





## **The Components for Local Selection**

## Mission, Vision and Values

An effective mission statement expresses the school's purpose, why it exists and what it hopes to achieve. It ensures consistency and clarity of purpose. The vision statement outlines the preferred future and indicates where the school is headed. It is an inspirational call to action that moves people into the future.

Values are a set of beliefs and principles that provide a framework for individuals in dealing with difficult choices and give a clear sense of what is important within the organization. Values are enduring and help to define the culture. Values represent the essence of who we are.

*"There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile and achievable vision of the future, widely shared."* (Nanus, 1992)

Indicators	Evidence
The mission statement is used as a guide whenever staff meet to set goals, plan and make decisions about student learning.	
School policies and procedures are evaluated regularly to ensure alignment to the school’s mission.	
The mission statement is reviewed regularly with staff, students, parents and community to ensure equity of outcomes for the diverse population of the school.	
Equity of outcomes for all students is integrated into all aspects of school life.	
The school has a clear and enduring vision for the future academic, social and physical well-being of all students. The vision statement: 1) sets standards of excellence and equity; 2) reflects high ideals and high expectations for learning; 3) clarifies the direction of the school (the school’s focus, goals and preferred future).	
Comments	

## Mission, Vision and Values continued

Indicators	Evidence
<p>The broader community was involved in creating the mission, vision and values. The mission, vision and values include input from stakeholders and touch all aspects of school life:</p> <p>1) student achievement; 2) curriculum; 3) culture; 4) students as a whole; 5) attention to individual students; 6) extra-curricular activities; 7) holistic education; 8) community engagement; and 9) equity.</p>	
<p>The vision and values of the school are woven into the character development program and are made explicit in the policies, practices and interactions.</p>	
<p>It is a value that parents and guardians are an integral part of the school community and are welcome in the school.</p>	
<p>The values of the school form the basis for interpersonal relationships based on respect and empathy.</p>	
<p>The values of the school reflect the mission and vision of the school.</p>	
<p>The school’s values are consistent with board and provincial priorities.</p>	
<b>Comments</b>	

Mission, Vision and Values continued

Indicators	Evidence
The vision and values of the board are woven into the school’s instructional and character development programs.	
Comments	



## School Culture

*"The more understood, accepted and cohesive the culture of a school, the better able it is to move in concert toward ideals it holds and objectives it wishes to pursue."* (Sergiovanni, 1995)

Indicators	Evidence
Students and staff feel safe, respected and welcome and there is a positive learning climate within the school.	
Students are at the centre of everything that happens at the school. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• culture of high expectations for students from all backgrounds and experiences</li><li>• progressive discipline</li><li>• opportunities for student voice</li><li>• optional programs to meet student needs</li><li>• timely interventions for under-achieving students</li><li>• opportunities for enrichment</li><li>• student choice within the instructional program</li><li>• student leadership opportunities</li><li>• peer, first language and cross-age tutoring</li><li>• social and emotional needs are addressed</li><li>• programs are in place to address socio-economic and other background factors</li></ul>	
The physical health and well-being of students is a priority.	
There is a wide array of extra-curricular activities that meet student needs and interests.	
School policies, programs and practices are inclusive and reflect the diversity that exists within the school and community.	
Comments	

## School Culture continued

Indicators	Evidence
Staff and student morale are positive.	
There is a sense of caring and belonging among students, teachers, support staff and administrators.	
A concern for human rights, equity, inclusion and anti-discrimination is evident in policies and practices within the school.	
There is a strong sense of teamwork within the school.	
Classroom routines have been developed collaboratively with students.	
There is a strong professional learning community in which staff work collegially to share their knowledge and expertise to improve student learning.	
<p>There is a character development program that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clearly articulates a set of attributes developed in collaboration with the community;</li> <li>• shares ownership among students and staff in the school;</li> <li>• promotes high expectations for positive interpersonal relationships;</li> <li>• provides opportunities for students to demonstrate the positive attributes;</li> <li>• promotes self-discipline;</li> <li>• encourages active and involved citizenship and community involvement; and</li> <li>• encourages student voice in decision making.</li> </ul>	
<b>Comments</b>	

## School Culture continued

Indicators	Evidence
There is a culture that supports inquiry, innovation and risk-taking towards continuous improvement in student achievement.	
The school culture is permeable to outside influences.	
Comments	

## Interpersonal Relationships

Schools are social organizations and as such interpersonal relationships matter. Students have a high need for affiliation and they value tremendously the relationships they forge. They often try to emulate the significant adults in their lives. Students learn better from teachers with whom they have a positive relationship.

*"... the critical role of leadership in nurturing trusting relationships appears to be a prerequisite in moving schools towards more meaningful forms of professional collaboration such as facilitating teacher planning and the analysis of student achievement data as a means to drive instruction. Risk taking on the part of staff seems to be related to a foundation of relational trust."* (Planche, 2006)

*"How school staff view and treat parents and community members – either as assets to the process of raising student achievement or as liabilities – was the common factor impacting the kind of relationships that exist between the school, family and community members."* (Jordan & Rodriguez, 2004)

Indicators	Evidence
<p>Respect and professional trust form the basis of relationships at the school.</p> <p>There is evidence of a collaborative and democratic process within the school. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school improvement planning</li> <li>• budget decisions</li> <li>• decisions around assessment and protocols</li> <li>• codes of conduct</li> <li>• dress codes</li> <li>• staff meeting content and process</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Comments</b></p>	



## Interpersonal Relationships continued

Indicators	Evidence
Positive relationships exist within the school and community. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• teachers and parents/guardians</li><li>• school and media</li><li>• school and community</li><li>• staff and students</li><li>• staff and administration</li><li>• staff and staff</li><li>• students and students</li></ul>	
There are multiple modes of ongoing, two-way communication both internally and externally.	
The school solicits and responds to feedback in a respectful and timely manner.	
Collegial relationships enable staff to engage in honest and open dialogue about school improvement and student achievement.	
The school functions as an effective professional learning community that utilizes high-yield strategies which result in improved student learning.	
Comments	

## Interpersonal Relationships continued

Indicators	Evidence
<p>There is evidence that the school pro-actively creates the conditions for students to relate effectively with one another across:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• race;</li> <li>• culture;</li> <li>• gender;</li> <li>• socio-economic groupings;</li> <li>• age;</li> <li>• ability levels; and</li> <li>• other areas specified by the Ontario Human Rights Code.</li> </ul> <p>Students, especially those who are often marginalized, feel a sense of connectedness within the school and feel there are individuals within the school with whom they can discuss their issues and concerns.</p> <p>There is evidence that diversity is valued and that efforts are made to ensure an inclusive school community.</p>	
<p><b>Comments</b></p>	

## Home, School and Community Outreach and Partnerships

Research indicates that student achievement improves when parents are meaningfully involved in the life of the school. Communities have a vested interest in the effectiveness of our schools and the quality of our graduates. Because education is a shared responsibility, it is important to build coalitions and alliances to support student learning.

*“An exemplary school recognizes the importance of establishing effective partnerships with the larger community – parents, residents, businesses, government agencies and other educational systems. It strives to develop the community’s allegiance to and ownership in the school.” (Dufour & Eaker, 1998)*

Indicators	Evidence
School practices reflect the needs of parents, families and guardians. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• time and place of parent meetings</li><li>• newsletters in multiple languages</li><li>• child care during meeting nights</li><li>• sensitivity to setting dates for school events</li><li>• school events reflect diverse cultures</li></ul>	
Strategies are in place to reach out and connect with the home and the broader community in order to increase participation and involvement in the life of the school.	
Community agencies that serve the needs of students and their families are utilized.	
Strategies are in place to promote inclusiveness and to meet student needs from diverse communities.	
There is a volunteer program in place which reflects the demographics of the community.	
The school council has a meaningful role in supporting student achievement.	
Comments	

## Home, School and Community Outreach and Partnerships continued

Indicators	Evidence
The school has a two-way communication strategy that is effective in reaching parents, other citizens, community groups and organizations within the community.	
The school utilizes the feedback it receives from its stakeholders, for example, from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• students;</li><li>• parents;</li><li>• school councils;</li><li>• community agencies; and</li><li>• local businesses.</li></ul>	
Actions of the school result in confidence in and a positive image in the school.	
The school has made tangible efforts to build confidence and a positive image in the community.	
In keeping with board protocol, the school involves and maintains ongoing communication with their trustees.	
Comments	



## Student Leadership and Engagement

The need to teach the important elements of democracy, to model what it looks like in action and to provide opportunities for involvement in a manner that engages young minds and unleashes their idealism and enthusiasm is an essential element of an effective school. Student engagement involves active participation, a strong student voice in decision making and involvement in school and community in meaningful ways. Student engagement affects achievement and motivation. When students learn the habit of being involved and the essence of good leadership, by observing and practising leadership in action in their schools, they will be able to become leaders in their community.

*“Motivating students is important – without it, teachers have no point of entry. But it is engagement that is critical, because the level of engagement over time is the vehicle through which classroom instruction influences student outcomes.” (Irvin, Meltzer & Dukes, 2007)*

Indicators	Evidence
Students see their school as a safe and caring environment.	
Students feel that their points of view are solicited and respected.	
Students are consulted, where appropriate, on the school-based decisions that will have an impact on their lives in school (e.g., discipline, curriculum, extra-curricular activities, Codes of Conduct).	
Students are actively engaged in all phases of the character development program in the school – in the selection of the attributes and in other programs that demonstrate good citizenship.	
There is an emphasis on the behaviours that demonstrate the agreed-upon character attributes. Recycling programs, raising money for charity, clubs and societies to support immigrant students are examples that provide leadership opportunities and reflect character attributes.	
Comments	

## Student Leadership and Engagement continued

Indicators	Evidence
There is a range of leadership opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• students in general;</li><li>• disengaged and marginalized students; and</li><li>• students from diverse backgrounds.</li></ul>	
Students are engaged in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• their academic work;</li><li>• cross-curricular activities;</li><li>• their communities; and</li><li>• student leadership initiatives.</li></ul>	
The school is pro-active in ensuring that students are able to access a variety of activities for community involvement and civic engagement.	
There is a wide range of intra-mural and extra-curricular activities to meet the needs of the diverse school population. The budget is equitably distributed to support activities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• girls and boys;</li><li>• students with disabilities;</li><li>• arts and athletics; and</li><li>• diverse cultures.</li></ul>	
Students take charge of their learning through student-led conferences.	
Students have opportunities to participate in student council or student government.	
Comments	

## **Part 3**

### Glossary and References

## **The School Effectiveness Framework:**

A Collegial Process for Continued Growth in the  
Effectiveness of Ontario Elementary Schools



## Glossary

### **Anchor Charts**

Anchor charts are charts designed by the class or by the teacher that list procedures and processes for a particular activity (e.g., the stages of the writing process, how to select a “just right” book, procedures for a literature circle) or reference items (e.g., reading/thinking strategies, examples of capitalization).

### **Assessment as Learning**

Assessment as learning is a process of developing and supporting metacognition for students. Assessment as learning focuses on the role of the student as the critical connector between assessment and learning.

### **Assessment for Learning**

Assessment for learning is about obtaining feedback on the teaching and learning and using that feedback to further shape the instructional process and improve learning. Frequent, descriptive feedback provides students with specific insights regarding their strengths as well as how to improve. Feedback to teachers enables them to focus their instruction. Assessment for learning is a high-yield instructional strategy.

### **Assessment of Learning**

Assessment of learning is summative in nature and is used to confirm what students know and can do and to demonstrate whether they have achieved the curriculum expectations.

### **Authentic Learning**

Authentic learning is learning that is derived from the kinds of experiences students have in real life and that is relevant to their lives and the “real world”. Authentic learning helps students to develop a sense of “connectedness” to the content of the curriculum and as they progress through the grades to see the relationship between “learning” and “earning”.

### **Capacity Building**

Capacity building is any strategy that increases the collective effectiveness of a group to raise the bar and close the gap of student learning. It involves helping to develop individual and collective knowledge and competencies, resources and motivation (Fullan, 2005).

### **Common Board Assessments**

Common board assessments are used to gauge the achievement of students across schools in a district in order to provide appropriate supports to each school. Examples of common board assessments are DRA, PM Benchmarks, CASI etc.

### **Common Grade-Level Assessments**

Common grade-level assessments are designed by teachers to provide formative feedback to improve teaching and learning. Common grade-level assessments are moderated by the teachers to ensure consistency of standards across a grade level. Frequency of common grade-level assessments varies from biweekly to quarterly.



## Co-teaching

Co-teaching is an informal professional learning arrangement in which teachers with different knowledge, skills and talents have agreed to share responsibility for designing, implementing, monitoring and/or assessing a curriculum program for a class of students on a regular basis (e.g., biweekly, monthly or per term). Co-teaching makes it possible for teachers to engage in teaching as collaborative problem-solving.

## Critical Friend

A critical friend is someone who is committed to helping colleagues turn theory into practice and provincial expectations into actual student learning. The purpose of having critical friends is to improve teaching and learning. Teachers who share a commitment to looking closely at their practice, at themselves and at the cultural perspectives they bring to their work can challenge colleagues' assumptions, spark ideas and instigate improvements in practice. In the context of this document critical means "important", "key" or "essential". It is in no way connected to criticism. Staff members should begin the process of self-assessment by developing norms about how to give feedback and how to question in a sensitive manner in order to encourage further learning and exploration of ideas. People are more willing to accept feedback within a climate of trust and respect. As well, critical friends, work best when norms of behaviour are established and adhered to within a staff. These include norms of collegiality and confidentiality and respect for divergent perspectives.

*Professionals need to feel supported by their colleagues. A "Critical Friend" is someone who will commit time to your project, help in framing the problem and identifying potential solutions, observe your teaching and assist with the analysis of data. He or she will view your practice with fresh eyes and help you see things that you might not see working alone. (Hannay, Wideman & Seller, 2006)*

## Critical Literacy

Critical literacy is a process of looking beyond the literal meaning of texts to observe what is present and what is missing, in order to analyse and evaluate the meaning and the author's intent. Critical literacy goes beyond conventional critical thinking because it focuses on issues related to fairness, equity and social justice. Students take a critical stance by asking what view of the world the text advances and whether they find this view acceptable. Critical literacy is about empowering students to be active, informed and concerned citizens who think critically about societal issues and are willing to be solution finders.

## Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is an approach to instruction that maximizes each student's growth by assessing the needs of the student at his or her current stage of development and then grouping students for instruction.

## Equity of Outcomes

The Ontario educational system has a mandate to reach every child and to bring about success for all regardless of personal circumstances. In a truly equitable system, factors such as race, gender or socio-economic status do not limit students from achieving ambitious outcomes or truncate their life chances. In fact, barriers are removed as schools assume responsibility for creating the conditions to ensure success.

The basic premise of equity is fairness and the belief in the moral imperative of schools to educate all children successfully. An equitable system, therefore, empowers all students to achieve. In such settings, variations in learning are not attributed to background variables. An equitable system:

- believes that all children can learn and achieve given the proper supports;
- assumes that ability exists in all groups, across demographic lines and that within any group, many students will excel;
- stresses high expectations for achievement and holds students to rigorous performance standards;
- rejects negative stereotypes about students' potential and ability;

- provides challenging and relevant curriculum for all students;
- disaggregates data in order to determine individual needs;
- meets individual needs through customization or personalization of the curriculum;
- differentiates instruction;
- accommodates diverse learning styles;
- ensures access and inclusion;
- connects students to real life experiences;
- capitalizes on diversity and creates a positive classroom environment based on respect and empathy; and
- involves parents in meaningful ways in their children's education.

Teacher/student relationships matter in an equitable environment. When teachers connect with students from diverse backgrounds and students feel valued and appreciated, student engagement and motivation to learn increase.

Equity of outcomes requires that educators utilize all the strategies within their repertoire to close achievement gaps between high-performing groups of students and those who are not achieving their potential.

Excellence and equity are two sides of the same coin.

### **Gradual Release of Responsibility**

The use of the gradual release of responsibility is a high-yield instructional strategy. It allows teachers to scaffold student learning by giving appropriate amounts of support to students based on their needs. For example, the teacher first models a new strategy, then explicitly teaches and works with students. After that, the teacher coaches students as they attempt to complete tasks on their own. Finally, students work independently with feedback from the teacher. The following approaches in a comprehensive/balanced literacy program follow the gradual release of responsibility:

- A) read-aloud and modeled writing
- B) shared reading and shared writing
- C) guided reading and guided writing
- D) independent practice with feedback and then transfer of learning to new situations

### **Higher-Order Thinking**

Higher-order thinking is the transformation of information and ideas that occurs when students combine facts and ideas and use them to synthesize, generalize, explain, hypothesize, or arrive at some conclusion or interpretation. By manipulating information and ideas through these processes, students are able to solve problems, acquire understanding and discover new meaning.

### **High-Yield Strategies**

High-yield strategies are instructional activities that have been verified through research to correlate with high student achievement.

### **Language-Rich Environment**

A language-rich environment is one in which adults and children have extended conversations about interesting topics, using sophisticated vocabulary to convey complex messages. These conversations happen regularly and the same topics can be visited on several different occasions (Snow, 1997).

## Mathematical Processes

These are processes through which students acquire and apply mathematical knowledge and skills: problem solving, reasoning and proving, reflecting, selecting tools and computational strategies, connecting, representing and communicating.

## Metacognition

Metacognition is the process of thinking about one's own thought processes. Metacognitive skills include the ability to monitor one's own learning.

## Problem-solving Model

George Polya's problem-solving model is a framework for helping students to think about a question before, during and after the problem-solving experience. It includes: understand the problem, make a plan, carry out the plan and look back to check the results.

## Professional Accountability

Professional accountability refers to one's responsibility to be accountable for one's decisions. Behaving as a professional includes a moral and ethical obligation to serve the interest of students, to expand one's repertoire, to reflect on the effectiveness of one's practice and to contribute to the continuing improvement of one's school and profession.

## Professional Learning Community (PLC)

A professional learning community is characterized by collective inquiry around student achievement data. An example of an exemplary inquiry process is teacher moderation in which teachers work together to design assessment tasks and assess student work. Participants in a professional learning community are relentless in challenging the status quo, seeking new methods to support student learning, testing those methods and then reflecting on the results. Improvement, growth and renewal are hallmarks of a professional learning community.

*A professional learning community is an inclusive group of people, motivated by a shared vision, who support and work with each other, finding ways inside and outside their immediate community, to enquire on their practice and together learn new and better approaches that will enhance all pupils' learning. (Stoll & Louis, 2006)*

## Portfolios

Portfolios are collections of samples of student work that students, with teacher support, carefully select and add to on an ongoing basis to track what they learn throughout the year. Both teachers and students assess the work in portfolios. Because students are asked to actively reflect on their learning in order to choose the samples that will go into the portfolios, portfolios are an especially powerful self-assessment tool.

## School Improvement Team

The school improvement team is internal to a school and, in ideal situations, is composed of staff who represent the various stakeholders in the school (e.g., a representative from the following areas: the primary, junior and intermediate divisions, special education, support staff etc.). The principal is always a member of the school improvement team.



### **Student-led Conferencing**

Student-led conferences engage students in direct communication with their parents through the use of portfolios illustrating their achievement and learning. Students take the lead in walking their parents through a selection of accomplishments and demonstrations of their work. Student-led conferences bring students to the centre of classroom assessment.

### **Teacher Inquiry/Study**

Teacher inquiry/study engages teachers in working on dilemmas and difficult situations from their daily classroom practice. They collaboratively study their instructional materials and teaching strategies with other teachers by studying student learning and work samples to make immediate changes in their classroom practices.

### **Teacher Moderation**

Teacher moderation is a process for ensuring that student assessment results are comparable across classes and schools. Through moderation, teachers examine student work together to share beliefs and practices, enhance their understanding, compare their interpretations of student results and confirm their judgments about a student's level of achievement. Teachers might also look at the assignment that was given and analyse its effectiveness in relation to the learning achieved by the students.

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## The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat The School Effectiveness Framework FEEDBACK FORM

We invite principals, supervisory officers, teachers and support staff to provide feedback on the content and processes outlined in the School Effectiveness Framework. All input will be considered during the implementation pilot year and findings will be incorporated in the revised version of the document.

1. How did the process help you to develop collaborative and collegial conversations about improvement within schools and at the board level?

3. In what ways can we improve the process of:

a) The School Self-Assessment

b) The District Review Process for Schools

2. How did the process help you to develop your capacity to improve student achievement?

4. Are the components sufficiently comprehensive? Are there components that should have been included or deleted? If so, please specify.



**The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat**  
**The School Effectiveness Framework FEEDBACK FORM**

5. How did the process further your agenda for school effectiveness and the improvement of student achievement?

6. What challenges did you experience in implementing this initiative and what recommendations do you have for overcoming them?

7. Please use the space below to provide additional comments and recommendations.